

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 496

By Forgety

A RESOLUTION to highlight the safeguards and related measures provided by the State of Tennessee during the transition to TNReady assessments.

WHEREAS, during the 2015-2016 school year, the State of Tennessee updated the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) with new assessments in English language arts and math, known as TNReady, which will more accurately assess higher level and critical thinking embedded in Tennessee's academic standards; and

WHEREAS, these new assessments were directed by the General Assembly in 2014 and procured through a competitive, open, and transparent process; and

WHEREAS, in response to educator concerns about potential adverse impact of the new assessments on teacher evaluations, the General Assembly enacted the Tennessee Teaching Evaluation Enhancement Act, which adjusted the impact of the new assessments during the assessment transition; and

WHEREAS, for the 2015-2016 school year, TNReady will account for only ten percent of a teacher's overall evaluation; and

WHEREAS, for the 2016-2017 school year, TNReady will account for only twenty percent of a teacher's overall evaluation; and

WHEREAS, it is not until the 2017-2018 school year that TNReady will account for the full thirty-five percent growth measure required under the law; and

WHEREAS, for the 2015-2016 through 2017-2018 school years, the most recent year of student growth data shall account for the entire percentage of growth data required in a teacher's evaluation – up to thirty-five percent – if such use results in a higher evaluation score for the teacher; and

WHEREAS, the enactment of this legislation was designed to alleviate concerns during a transition to a new test administered in a new, online format; and

WHEREAS, educators are further protected by the use of student growth in teacher evaluation versus student proficiency; and, while overall student proficiency may drop in the first year of TNReady, based on prior Tennessee testing transitions, student growth scores are expected to remain consistent; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Teaching Evaluation Enhancement Act further protects educators by clarifying complete local school district flexibility in utilizing assessment results in local employment decisions such as promotion, placement, and compensation; and

WHEREAS, seeking to further address the concerns of educators, school administrators, and parents relative to the assessment programs and policies in the public schools of Tennessee, Commissioner Candice McQueen of the Tennessee Department of Education established the Tennessee Task Force on Student Testing and Assessment in March 2015; and

WHEREAS, members of the Task Force included a diverse group of education stakeholders, including parents, students, teachers, principals, superintendents, school board members, members of the General Assembly, and officials from the State Board of Education and the Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, receiving testimony and reports from a broad and inclusive spectrum of educator stakeholders from across Tennessee during its six months of study, the Task Force focused on the following four themes: 1) reducing unnecessary and redundant student tests; 2) transparency in testing; 3) aligning tests to postsecondary and workforce expectations; and 4) supporting school districts around test scheduling and logistics; and

WHEREAS, the final recommendations of the Task Force include a variety of changes to Tennessee's testing requirements and policies, including the release of test questions to increase transparency and build trust among students, parents, and teachers; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force's extensive and diligent review has strongly reinforced the belief that our testing program, with the conversion to TNReady, provides robust assessment

tools to be utilized by teachers, schools, and school districts to improve student achievement;  
now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED  
NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE  
CONCURRING, that appropriate safe harbor provisions and protections have been put in place  
for public school teachers through the Tennessee Teaching Enhancement Evaluation Act and  
other actions, such as the recommendations from the Tennessee Task Force on Student  
Testing and Assessment and that the State of Tennessee and local school districts have  
implemented and will continue to implement thoughtful and extensive provisions to provide for a  
successful transition to TNReady assessments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared  
for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.